

What is the Uniform Foster Care Rate?

The Uniform Foster Care Rate (UFCR) is a standard scale of monthly payments to foster parents for the cost of caring for a foster child. Because the rate is based on the needs of each child, it may also include extra payments (called supplemental and exceptional payments) in addition to a BASIC MAINTENANCE RATE.

What does the basic maintenance rate include?

The basic rate is intended to cover food, clothing, housing, basic transportation, personal care, and other expenses on a monthly basis.

The current basic rate for each child is listed below by age group. There will be a 5 percent increase to all levels for the basic rate effective January 1, 2006. The new rate amounts are also included below.

Effective Date		
Age of Child	Jan. 2005	Jan. 2006
0 - 4	\$302.00	\$317.00
5 - 11	\$329.00	\$346.00
12 - 14	\$375.00	\$394.00
15 - 18	\$391.00	\$411.00

When a foster child in your care turns 5, 12, or 15 years of age, you will receive the next highest rate effective on the child's birthday.

You will receive payment for your foster child for the day the child enters your home but not for the day the child leaves your home.

On the next page is a breakdown of the percentages typically spent on the basic necessities for children at various ages. This is intended as a guide. It is understood that your family will use the monthly uniform foster care rates in the manner which best meets your foster child's needs.

Guidelines for use of the Basic Rate

These specific breakdowns by food, clothing, housing, and personal care and other expenses are based on the cost of raising a child as calculated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Because the cost of raising a child is more than the amount provided through the Basic

Maintenance Rate, these percentages provide only a guide for foster parents. The figures presented are percentages of the basic maintenance rate received for a child in the designated age group.

FOOD		
Age 0 to 4:		17 to 30%
Age 5 to 11:		26 to 33%
Age 12 to 14:		Approx. 33%
Age 15+		Approx. 33%
CLOTHING		
Age 0 to 4:		Approx. 6%
Age 5 to 11:		Approx. 8%
Age 12 to 14:		Approx. 11%
Age 15+		Approx. 13%
HOUSING		
Age 0 to 4:		48 to 58%
Age 5 to 11:		Approx. 43%
Age 12 to 14:		Approx. 39%
Age 15+		Approx. 36%
PERSONAL CARE AND OTHER EXPENSES*		
Age 0 to 4:		Approx. 18%
Age 5 to 11:		Approx. 19%
Age 12 to 14:		Approx. 17%
Age 15+		Approx. 17%

\* Other expenses include but are not limited to haircuts, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and school supplies.

Is there an additional payment for children who have special needs?

Yes. If your foster child has emotional, behavioral, or medical problems, you may request an additional monthly payment to cover the costs of caring for the child's special needs. When approved, this payment is called a SUPPLEMENTAL RATE.

How is the supplemental rate determined?

Within the first 30 days after a foster child is placed in your home, you and your case worker will discuss whether the child may qualify for a

supplemental payment. If your foster child has needs that require special care or supervision, the case worker will submit a description of the child's problems or characteristics.

Evaluations from doctors, psychiatrists, therapists, or other specialists may be included with the case worker's report.

Using a point scale and all of the information regarding the child's emotional, behavioral, and medical problems, the placing agency determines the level of care the child requires.

This level of care establishes the supplemental payment.

Can supplemental rates be changed?

You and your case worker will review your foster child's progress at least every six months. At those reviews, the supplemental rate may be changed if the child's condition is changed. Inform your case worker of significant changes when they occur.

What if a child needs constant care or supervision?

If a child has extraordinary needs, you may receive an additional payment called an EXCEPTIONAL RATE. This payment may be provided if the child's placement in your home allows the child to be released from a more restrictive setting or prevents the child's placement in such a setting.

You may receive an exceptional rate if, for example:

- the child requires 24-hour medical care supervised by a doctor or nurse.
- the child has severe behavior problems.
- the child is diagnosed as having a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia, severe mental retardation, brain damage, or autism.
- the child chronically abuses alcohol or other drugs and needs close supervision.

No monthly payment for the combined basic maintenance, supplemental, and exceptional rates may exceed \$2,000.

What if a child comes to my home with few or no clothes?

You may be provided an INITIAL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE (see table below) if:

- it is your foster child's first placement; or
- it has been at least four months since the child was last in out-of-home care.

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Initial Clothing Allowance</u>
0 - 4	up to \$150.00
5 - 11	up to 175.00
12 - 14	up to 200.00
15 - 18	up to 200.00

Periodic clothing allowances, such as for seasonal clothing, are not allowed. An amount is included in the basic maintenance rate for this purpose each month.

What if I don't agree with the rate?

You may request that the rate be redetermined. You may discuss your concerns with the rate setter and the agency director. If you still disagree with the rate, you should consider appealing through the fair hearing process. Your agency director or foster care coordinator will tell you how to request a fair hearing.

Is there liability insurance for foster parents?

A statewide fund provides some protection when your own insurance policies do not. The state fund covers some property damage and personal injury caused by the foster child. The extent of coverage and exclusions is subject to change. The agency that licensed your foster home can give you up-to-date information.

More questions?

Contact your case worker or Foster Care Coordinator for further explanations. See also our Foster Care website at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/children/foster>

PLACEMENT DATE	LAST REVIEW RATE					
	MONTHLY RATE					
	EXCEPTIONAL RATE					
	SUPPLEMENTAL RATE					
MY FOSTER CHILDREN'S RECORDS	BASIC MAINTENANCE RATE					
	CHILD'S NAME					

Understanding the

UNIFORM  
FOSTER  
CARE  
RATE

Effective January 1, 2005 -  
December 31, 2006



Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Children and Family Services  
Bureau of Programs and Policies